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Bridging the curriculum thematically: Nature and literature meet

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BRIDGING THE CURRICULUM THEMATICALLY: NATURE AND LITERATURE MEET

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SUMMARY

I have developed three thematic units that are designed to be used in the elementary classroom. They are: frogs, spiders, and butterflies. I choose these subjects because understanding nature and its creatures is important if we are to foster cooperation and maintain a safe existence for ourselves. Learning about these animals can best be accomplished through an integrated language approach which includes reading, writing, speaking, and listening. I hope here, by laying these creatures before other teachers, that some errant spark may ignite interest and further thematic experiment to help in the integration of the school curriculum.

In the whole language model of reading, reading is considered a process of four interrelated cue systems: graphic, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic. These four cuing systems are used to predict, confirm, and integrate meaning. Content is the focus of learning in whole language. Meaning is acquired from the reader's background and the author's background. Though oral and written language are important, neither is primary. The reader and the author may end up with a different understanding of the same printed material. Learning should begin with the natural and familiar language of the child. When children stumble on unfamiliar words, they are encouraged to read on and then to come back only if necessary.

A variety of reading-books or picture-books offers students a wider exposure to our world and language than do text-books. Just

like adults, young children learn best when what they have read is related in some direct way to their own lives and experiences. The lessons, the colors, the themes—all become parts in a whole and healthy child and are more likely to be embraced by him or her than the one-dimensional textbooks we have traditionally used.

Thematic units have been taught by many teachers, but the definition of what a thematic unit is differs from one teacher to another. Two of the criteria for a good theme are that it be rich with literature (fiction or nonfiction) and that it have natural links to other areas of the curriculum. A third criterion is time; enough time needs to be allotted to a theme so that it may be satisfactorily dealt with, and all aspects of its complicated interrelations brought to a successful close.

I use the class textbook along with many other materials to offer the students a variety of types of writing, dialogue, and illustrations. Each student needs exposure to many types of books, because what one student may find fits his needs may not be what another student needs or desires. This global approach to learning is achieved by using books from many authors. Art, music, dance, and drama, along with the traditional reading, writing, speaking, and listening, offer the student many additional opportunities to respond to a textbook.

Thematic units offer students many opportunities to use their own schema, or personal background knowledge, and add new knowledge that they acquire through research or teacher input. The teacher can enliven her curriculum and provide ample opportunities

for the exercise of reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills.

Experiences with nature cannot be replaced solely with literature or a story read by a teacher. Literature can attract and entice students into listening and learning about our world.

To Steve, my husband, without whom
"kerning" and "em dash" would be Greek.
His loving assistance is invaluable.

I would also like to thank my mom and dad for so much emotional and financial support during my college years; my sister, Lori and her family for their understanding and caring; my grandmother, Lotti; the staff of Gerald Smith Elementary School in Bloomington, California; and my project advisors, professors Adria Klein and Patricia Tefft Cousin, for their patience and support.

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STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Dewey writes that it "is always possible to find subject matter that will give the children just as much training in reading, spelling, history, literature . . . as would dry Gradgrind facts of a routine textbook type" (Dewey, 1962, p. 97).

Let us teach the curriculum, he is pleading, not by instilling the ideas and aims of but one publisher represented by a single textbook, but by exposing the student to varied resources using multimedia experience that will capture her attention and head her to further explorations. I have come to realize in my classroom that the few pages residing between the covers of any textbook are no match when pitted against the myriad of materials that the world outside those covers contains. Concepts of what amphibians are and what their place in the grand scheme is, come alive when live amphibians are brought in. Art and music developed by my students help them explore and build their notions of what these little, slimy creatures (amphibians) are, and illustrate for me exactly how my students see their world.

More and more children are coming into my domain from families in which parents must work to make ends meet. Grandparents and baby-sitters may be the only ones who see the child from the time that she comes home from school to her sleepy retirement to bed. Grandparents and baby-sitters who care for the child may not have the knowledge or the time to spend helping with reading, writing, or other

homework that a child needs to complete after school.

It has therefore fallen incumbent upon us educators to somehow become "the great equalizers," making up for the inequities of our troubled societies. It is becoming increasingly difficult to attract our children's attentions; we are competing with so many distractions, and are so often carrying the ball alone—the parents (or parent) are off in their own game, trying to make ends meet or commuting for hours.

In my classroom, I have chosen to implement a thematic approach by integrating all areas of the curriculum in hopes of producing students who devote both mind and time to learning because they are not just interested, but excited by the topic being taught, as well.

> Young children are naturally curious about the world around them and read informational books to satisfy this curiosity. Teachers can capitalize on this natural interest by integrating nonfiction with related fiction, poetry, and "real life" materials to develop a holistic reading program with materials that are meaningful and motivating to young readers. (McClure, p. 784)

A variety of reading-books or picture-books—not just textbooks—offers students a wider exposure to the world and language. Just like adults, young children learn best when what they have read is related in some direct way to their own lives and experiences. The lessons, the colors, the themes—all become parts in a whole and healthy child

and are more likely to be embraced by her than the one-dimensional textbooks we have traditionally used.

Teaching holistically using several approaches and media to capture a child's interests and help her retain her new information is described by Harste and Burke (1982) as the philosophy of teaching using whole language. Whole language is only one of three reading models described by Harste and Burke, by which children can be led to an acquisition of knowledge.

Models of Reading

In the decoding model of reading, sound is the main focus. The reader uses sounds to form words and gets meaning from these sounds. Verbal language is primary and print is a part of speech. Reading is exact and if you vary from what is on the printed page, it is considered an error. Language is built from the smallest part to the whole. Routman (1988) disagrees that language is learned from the smallest part to the whole. She explains: "It has become crystal clear to me—and it has taken about ten years to come to this understanding—that children learn phonics best after they can already read" (p. 44). When a child stumbles on an unfamiliar word she is encouraged to take extra time to sound it out.

I have discovered that students using this decoding model of reading become focused on the letters and their sounds out of context to the word's whole. The words and sentences are therefore forgotten after the child struggles through each sound of each letter to make a

word. Reading complete stories becomes impossible. "If we want to keep language learning easy, we have to help learners learn from whole to part" (Goodman, 1986, p. 20).

In the skills model of reading, reading is considered a hierarchy. There are three skill levels: decoding, vocabulary, and comprehension. Effective reading takes place when a string of words on a page is read. Verbal language is of primary importance and the print is a part of speech. Reading is executed exactly as the words lie on the page and if a word is misread, the student is considered in error. Successful reading occurs only after the three skill levels are attained. Vocabulary recognition is the first step towards reading.

When using the skills model, I have discovered that students can say and write words correctly, but these words do not necessarily become part of the students' working vocabularies. If the word was learned for a spelling test two or three months previously, it may not be remembered now. "The important difference in teaching now is that phonics and word attack skills are taught in a meaningful way, as the need arises in the context of the literature, as opposed to a sequential, predetermined hierarchy unrelated to the actual reading of text or to specific students" (Routman, 1988, p. 48).

In the whole language model of reading, reading is considered a process of four interrelated cuing systems: graphic, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic. These four cuing systems are used to predict,, confirm, and integrate meaning. Content is the focus of

learning in whole language. Meaning is acquired from the reader's background and the author's background. Though oral and written language are important, neither is primary. The reader and the author may each end up with a different understanding of the same printed material. Learning should begin with the natural and familiar language of the child. When children stumble on unfamiliar words they are encouraged to read on and come back only if it is necessary.

Because I am making the transition from a skills teacher to a whole language teacher, I am now lecturing less and helping students more and more by taking the role as planner or facilitator for the activities they suggest. Being a "mere" planner or facilitator does not mean students run freely in the classroom choosing any activity they please. Rather, they help to make decisions about what they would like to research while we undertake our adventurous explorations of each new topic.

To evaluate the progress that my students are making, I invite them to evaluate themselves. I make folders for each student, including in them samples of their artwork, stories, and what-not. The student and I can each assess her progress. Together my students and I are learning. They are learning the necessary curriculum needed by a second grade student to help them succeed in their futures, and I am learning how to best help them help themselves to learn and be independent researchers.

In my classroom, I have found by using the whole language

model of reading, students are willing to take risks in both their reading and writing of unfamiliar words. Whole language learners are encouraged to give input into what they would like to learn, and are therefore willing and eager to pursue more information about a topic. The student will work in class and at home because she wants to learn as much as she can. A student's ideas are valued and when the student writes, emphasis is put on the content of what is written more than on the mechanics of the writing; mechanics can be practiced at another time when this mechanical work will be less likely to impede the development of great ideas.

Correct spelling of words may take a little more time, but will be developed by experimenting with the written language. Ken Goodman says that to make learning a language easy it "should be whole, meaningful, and relevant to the learners"(Goodman, 1986,p.9).

I present thematic units in my classroom by beginning with a brain-storming exercise called "webbing." Webbing is a technique in which the main topic is placed in the center of a page. Moving away from this center are ideas that could be considered ways of studying the main topic. I also use webbing graphs to present a topic to fellow teachers who are interested in studying the same topic. Routman (1991) is sure to remind her readers that, not only is it important to develop themes, but the interrelationships of important concepts must also be stressed (p. 278). By using this webbing pre-writing organizer, I insure that my students become aware of interrelationships in the

themes we study.

Using thematic units is a means of bridging the gap between seemingly inactive print lying upon a page, and the colorful and exciting world outside that black and white book. Using thematic units enables me to bring color to my lessons, and a more whole world into my classroom.

I have developed three thematic units included in this project : butterflies, spiders, and frogs (see Appendices). I choose these units because understanding nature and its creatures is important if we are to maintain a cooperative and safe existence. I believe adults and children need to be aware of which animals live around and with them and how to coexist harmoniously with them. Learning about these animals can best be accomplished through an integrated language approach which includes reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Routman (1991) states that "[i]ntegration, or integrated language arts, is an approach to learning and a way of thinking that respects the interrelationship of the language processes—reading, writing, speaking, and listening—as integral to meaningful teaching in any area" (p.276).

These three thematic units—butterflies, spiders, and frogs—are not included as independent topics in the required science curriculum for second grade students in my district. These three animals are found individually in some textbook or other at my school, but are not dealt with at length or necessarily interestingly.

I use the class textbook along with many other materials to offer the students a variety of types of writing, dialogue, and illustrations. Each student needs exposure to many types of books, because what one student may find fits her needs may not be what another student needs or desires. This global approach to learning is achieved by using books from many authors. Art, music, dance, and drama *along* with the traditional reading, writing, speaking, and listening offer the student many additional opportunities to respond to a textbook.

Dewey challenged teachers to make learning relevant as well as fun; do not be restricted to a single text, he advised, but bring as much of the outside world as possible inside. Augment and enrich the "traditional" texts by bringing in materials to add extra dimensions to two dimensional texts. Opening the same pages, from the same books, year after year, cannot but become boring to the teacher and student. Information needs to be made memorable to be remembered. Thematic presentations of our world offer sound and interesting lessons that involve the student to his core.

I offer here three thematic units that, it is hoped, will encourage students to become better informed about our all too fragile world. I have chosen the subjects of these units for their adaptability to becoming ideal lab animals to little lab technicians. Butterflies, spiders, and frogs are generally harmless while being perused by the curious little student and are (so far) plentiful. They may, at the conclusion of their incarcerations, be safely released into the habitats

from which they were originally plucked. All three lesson units, I believe, offer students experiences that move them, not only through the required state curriculum, but beyond it. Students need to know that learning comes from acquiring knowledge from many places, and cannot be found in a single text, but must be sought in many different and varied resources.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teaching students through a whole language model of reading can support a variety of different learners with a gamut of lifestyles. Whole language teaching also offers students varied experiences that may not be available in the other two models of reading, decoding or skills. Integration of the curriculum is also made possible when the holistic approach to teaching thematic units is used.

Rationale for Using Thematic Units

"The thematic approach is not a new teaching concept" (Brountas, 1989, p. 53). For many years teachers have been presenting units to students that focus on a single concept. Teachers are required to teach so much material that it is becoming increasingly difficult to cover the huge amount of information each year. Thematic units help to solve some of the problems by combining lessons. This gives the teacher enough time to cover what is required each year at each grade level.

> As professionals we are constantly striving to be more effective teachers—effective in terms of providing the best possible program for each child, and efficient in our use of time, material and energy (the children's as well as our own). The thematic approach meets these criteria very well. It also gives us the flexibility to develop a unit of study that integrates many disciplines as they relate to a specific topic of instruction. (p.53)

Thematic units have been taught by many teachers, but the definition of what a thematic unit is differs from one teacher to another. Baskwill (1988) explains the vital ingredients of a successful thematic unit.. Two of the criteria for a good theme, she explains, are that it be rich in literature, both fiction and nonfiction, and that it have natural links to other areas of the curriculum. A third criterion is time. Enough time needs to be allotted to a theme so that it may be satisfactorily dealt with, and all aspects of its complicated interrelations brought to a successful close (p. 80).

Routman (1991) further qualifies Baskwill's definition by adding that a thematic unit is an integrated one only when the topic or theme is meaningful, relevant to the curriculum and students' lives, consistent with whole language principles, and authentic in the interrelationship of the language processes (p. 278).

Correlation units, which some teachers present as thematic units, differ from an authentic thematic unit in several ways. "The units incorporate some elements of math, science, social studies, art, and music, but there is often little or no development of important ideas. This is a correlation, not integration" (p. 277).

Creating thematic units may, at first, seem too time-consuming. What makes the units valuable to a teacher is when students become involved and help create and embellish each unit. "A lot of work goes into the choice and planning of a theme, but the results are worth the effort. Through such diligent planning comes a depth of experience

and a built-in flexibility which support rather than control children's natural learning capabilities" (Baskwill, 1988, p.82).

Research has begun to provide support for teaching using thematic units and others have noticed this and have begun teaching teachers to use thematic units in their own classrooms.

> The decision to develop thematic approaches to teacher education was based, in part, on the realization that the current structure of traditional programs was inadequate as an intervention in a process of learning to teach that begins for each student in childhood school experiences. Altering the structure of the program, it was believed, could significantly increase the power of formal teacher preparation to overcome students' naive conceptions about teaching and create alternative views of effective teaching practice. (Barnes, 1987, p.14)

Thematic units appear to be a rediscovered way to involve and employ students in their own educations. Students help to choose and develop each topic through activities in reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

> [Thematic centers] can help a child to make connections between bits of knowledge and to understand that reading and writing are not simply activities to be done between 9:00-11:00 A.M. but rather are ways to know, ways to learn, and ways to enjoy. Certainly other means of classroom organization can

accomplish these purposes, but organization by thematic centers is worth revisiting. (Staab, 1991, p. 113)

Many of today's educators support a teaching style using the thematic approach. Thematic units offer students many opportunities to use their own schema, or personal background knowledge, and add new knowledge that they acquire through research or teacher input. DeZengremel (1990) writes: "There are many timely and unique topics to research in thematic units. Enliven your curriculum and provide a multitude of opportunities for reading, writing, listening, and speaking by incorporating thematic units into your program" (p. 86)!

A Whole Language Perspective for Teaching Thematic Units

Harste and Burke (1982) define the three models of reading. Decoding or sound/symbol model of reading focuses on the sounds that words make. Language is built from the smallest part to the whole. Routman (1988) is convinced that the reason our good readers are good at phonics is that when they read they can intuitively make sense of phonics. "Reading is then viewed as a word-by-word process which is quite inefficient, nonsensical, and frustrating" (p. 44).

The skills model of reading defines reading as a hierarchy. In reading, the reader needs to read exactly what is written on the page. If a word read is not the word that was written, the reader is in error. Successful reading is obtained through vocabulary recognition. "The important difference in teaching now is that phonics and word attack

skills are taught in a meaningful way, as the need arises in the context of literature, as opposed to a sequential, predetermined hierarchy unrelated to the actual reading of text or to specific students." (Routman, 1988, p. 48). Routman reflects that the learning carryover is much greater when the child has a real purpose for learning the skill.

Last, the whole language model of reading is considered a process of four interrelated cuing systems: graphic, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic. These three cuing systems are used to predict, confirm, and integrate meaning. Meaning is acquired from the reader's background and the author's background. Oral and written language are equally important. "Holistic instruction shows continuous respect for language, for learners, and for teachers. It begins with everyday, useful, relevant, functional language, and moves through a full range of written language including literature in all its variety" (Goodman, 1986, p. 43). The whole language model of reading includes both the teacher and the student in the creation of the units that the class will study, therefore making the classroom a learning environment in which all have a vested interest.

> Whole Language teachers believe when children are immersed in language through reading, writing, being read to, observing and listening, reading behavior emerges naturally. Instead of using basal readers or prepackaged programs, teachers use a wide variety of literature such as trade books, Big Books,

poems, magazine and newspaper articles, comic strips, posters and advertisements. Through these materials children discover how language is used. (Ferguson, 1988, p. 25)

This model of reading is interested in the whole product, not just some of its parts. Goodman (1986) states language should be whole, meaningful, and relevant to the learners (p. 9).

The whole language model of reading seems to best support thematic units. "The Whole Language teacher presents opportunities for learning and development by relating activities to a single theme. Children's needs, interests, and abilities plus the curriculum goals help determine the theme" (Ferguson, 1988, p. 25). The students' curiosity about things helps to create the units they will study, making the lessons exciting and motivating to both the student and the teacher.

Learning centers can be found in whole language classrooms today. Whole language teachers present their lessons organized around thematic units. Integration of the language processes—reading, writing, listening, and speaking—help to build meaningful lessons. Book writing and centers designed for specific writing are incorporated into the classroom activities.

A thematic unit can take weeks to complete because of the integration of so many areas of the curriculum. "Whole language integrates language and its use in learning. Thematic units are planned to last several weeks and integrate social studies, science, language arts, mathematics, and arts" (Goodman, 1989, p. 218).

> The focus of the whole-language curriculum is not on the content of what is being studied but on the learner. This does not minimize the importance of content; rather, it represents the belief that content can only be understood and seriously studied when learners are actively involved and interested in learning, are participating in deciding what will be learned, and are relating what they are learning to what they already know. (p.114)

The whole language teaching model and thematic units seem to support each other. The student and the teacher are the deciding factor on what will be studied and how it will be studied. Lessons are prepared after considering what the students want to learn about a specific topic. Science units, social science units, literature units, art units, drama units, math units, music units, and combinations of several units provide a focal point for student inquiry. Students and teachers are continuously involved in planning and implementing activities to provide the classroom with integrated and productive study units that may be short or ongoing in length.

Integration of the Curriculum

> Dewey (1943) discusses the importance of the integration of curriculum, arguing that "we do not have a series of stratified earths, one of which is mathematical, another physical, another historical, and so on . . . . All studies grow out of relations in the one great common world." (Goodman,1989, p.116)

Dewey, like Goodman, wants learning to be encouraged from the whole, not the parts of learning. Each subject does not need a specific time period during the school day, but a combination of several each period could improve the lesson being taught because a single subject is not the objective, but what needs to be learned.

Integration of the curriculum offers the students a variety of learning from different subject areas enhancing one content area to its fullest potential. Students can gain knowledge from many different curricular areas. A time should not be set aside to teach only math or reading, but both subjects might be integrated.

Goodman (1986) reminds us if language is learned best and easiest when it is whole and in natural context, then integration is a key principle for language development and learning through language. In fact, language development and context become a dual curriculum (p. 30).

One subject area may only cover a small amount of information, whole language teachers find ways to interrelate subjects without actually announcing to the students that reading, math, and art are all being taught at one lesson. Whole language teachers assist and encourage students to research individually or as a group for additional information about a topic being studied. The more information gathered the better the students can relate to what is being studied.

"Integration is implicit in whole language teaching. Integration,

or integrated language arts, is an approach to learning and a way of thinking that respects the interrelationship of the language processes—reading, writing, speaking, and listening—as integral to meaningful teaching in any area" (Routman, 1991,p. 276). Integration of the language processes is important. A better understanding of how to store new information and combine it with retained information is made easy when the barrier between subjects is not present. In combining the language processes new learning becomes apparent. "Within the language arts of writing, reading, listening, and speaking, children learn conventions such as standard grammar, spelling, handwriting, and articulation by using them naturally and in concert with each other" (Watson, 1989, p. 137). Learning difficult conventions like standard grammar, spelling, handwriting, and articulation become easy and relevant when the student can apply them to what they are currently studying. The conventions, which are needed are also desired and pursued by the students in order to make their papers works that can be published and read by all.

Integrating Drama, Music, and Art

In integrating subject areas, let us not exclude such important areas as drama, music, and art. These areas of the curriculum are touched upon, but not expanded on. "As teachers we want to encourage children's involvement in this more sustained reader/text interaction by engaging in activities that can include discussion, dramatization, writing, art, music, or even further reading" (Martinez

and Nash, 1991, p. 140). Reading offers both the students and the teacher many opportunities to expand the learning into the curricular areas of drama, music, and art.

> Yet we want to argue that for at least some books, reading should be conceived of as only the beginning of literature experience. Certainly, reading by itself may be a satisfying and sufficient experience for many books, but what we should remember as mature readers are the times that our literature experience did not stop when the last page was read and the book was closed. Instead, our interaction with the book continued after reading, in some cases long after the book was read. (Rosenblatt, 1978). (Martinez and Nash, 1991, p.140)

Drama offers students a chance to express themselves. It offers them an opportunity to be someone they would like to be or in a period of time they would otherwise never experience in their lives. "Drama thus seems central to the language arts—to talking, listening, reading, and writing—and to language growth" (Wagner,1988, p. 46). Learning should involve language and in drama students are talking about their acting parts, listening to others recite their dialogue, reading aloud or silently while performing a readers theater script, writing can be in preparing a script from a book or changing dialogue used in a current script. "Drama encourages children to use language for meaningful purposes by actively involving them and motivating them to read, write, listen, and speak" (Danielson and Dauer, 1990, p.

138). What a wonderful and active way to engage in language processes.

"It has been found that the use of music in the teaching of reading, especially in the elementary school, may motivate and build the ability of children, whether or not they are musically talented or intellectually above-average" (O'Bruba, 1987, p. 170). Music is heard by all through listening to the car radio or performing in a chorus as part of a large group, but music is not easy or comfortable for everybody.

Music can make a story from a book leap from the pages and become alive. "Music can be used in beginning reading programs for stimulation and inspiration. The beginning months of the school year can be spent in 'whole child' activities such as group singing, charades, and pantomime" (p. 171). Activities like group singing, charades, and pantomime make music, through a whole class experience, less threatening.

Songs can be created from any area of the curriculum or by combining several areas of the curriculum making the flow of information natural and meaningful. "Music and singing fit the needs of the whole language approach readily. The songs chosen ca be a part of the child's environment or experience or songs that the child constructs or dictates. The meaning in a song can be quite personal, but no one would ever consider taking a song apart into meaningless segments" (Harp, 1988, p. 455). Again Goodman's statement that

language can best be acquired when it is whole, resurfaces and applies using the whole piece of literature versus parts of the whole piece of literature, to the curricular area of music.

Art is yet another way to express our individualism as students and teachers. How beneficial a reading program is without art, is hard to say. "Using art as an enhancer of the reading program can provide the extra stimulation and motivation that many young readers need. Art provides an outlet for the creativity of the young child. By using their imagination and experiencing the ''hands on' approach children become intrinsically motivated to read" (O'Bruba, 1987, p. 174). A child might at first find it easier to paint or draw a story about the main character of a book they are reading. Younger children prove that written language may take longer to acquire than story drawing by pictures, because art is varied and language is not. Painted pictures come in all styles, books usually are printed in a language that a large group of people can read and discuss.

Drama, music, and art help to integrate a child's curriculum. Drama, music, and art also offer students who excel at these fine arts an opportunity to shine and share their expertise. Experiencing a book through movement and creative activities is a welcomed change from having to sit passively reading in a chair.

Conclusion

Thematic units are not just units based on a single topic, but are contain vital ingredients, like rich literature, both fiction and

nonfiction, natural links to other areas of the curriculum. Thematic units unfold and enrich the students and teachers with valuable knowledge.

The whole language model of reading seems to support and nurture the teaching of thematic units in a classroom. Whole language lessons offer the students and the teachers an opportunity to plan and initiate lessons using a teamwork strategy. Students and teachers are therefore excited and motivated to pursue the topics being studied. The learner is the focus in a whole language learning model, but not to the point of diminishing the importance of the content being studied. In preparing thematic units, teachers must remember that a correlation unit has some of the elements of many curricular areas, but the areas are not integrated to develop important ideas.

Integration of the curriculum, as well as the integration of the language processes—reading, writing, listening, and speaking—help to create meaningful and relevant information for the students and the teachers. Drama, music, and art offer students whole body experiences that are both motivating and rewarding to all students, independent of their learning capabilities.

GOALS AND LIMITATIONS

Goals

There are four major goals for the three thematic units presented in this paper.

The first goal is to expose the students to a variety of interesting literature. It is important to interest students in books so that they will continue towards a lifelong love of books and knowledge. Students need to discover the many adventures that books can send them on, from vacation getaways to imaginary islands. Books can be a key to open any door to new learning.

The second goal is to integrate reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Students might excel at one or more of these four language areas so that, by integrating as many of these areas as possible, all students will experience some success. Integration of reading, writing, listening, and speaking activities should occur naturally, without being forced.

The third goal is to integrate *across* the curriculum. Frogs, spiders, and butterflies are great science topics, but these three areas of study should also encourage math, social studies, health, drama, art, music, and physical education lessons as well. Topics can best be remembered through enlightening and memorable experiences.

The last goal is to encourage social development. In using the whole language model of reading and a variety of group settings, students will be required to interact as both a team and individually.

These experiences will allow students to learn new problem solving methods from others and to sharpen their own social interaction skills. Working as a team requires the active participation and cooperation of all involved to make it work, and being a team is the best way to learn how to work together towards common goals.

Limitations

Limitations need to be addressed when using the thematic units found in this project.

First, the lessons are mainly presented from a whole language model of reading perspective, but not exclusively. Some skill activities are introduced and may need to be adapted to better fit a program a teacher promotes in his or her classroom.

Second, the lessons are teacher prepared with little student input. During a lesson, changes may be made to adapt the lesson to the characteristics of any particular group of students.

Third, the time allotted for each unit may need to be adjusted if live specimens are being used in the classroom. Frogs need warmer weather in order to grow faster, but a heater in the tank can be used to artificially speed up the growth time. The season in which the unit takes place may either interfere with or embellish the unit. Butterflies grown from eggs need to be released when the weather is warmer or they will die from the cold air; leaves will be scarce, also, at some times of the year.

Last, the units have been prepared for a second grade

classroom, but can easily be adapted to a first or a third grade group of students.

The units do not adequately address the needs of students who are bilingual.

These limitations are offered with the aim of helping any teacher or demonstrator in presenting a unit successfully.

EVALUATION

Traditionally, tests have been administered to students in an attempt to measure how much of what it was intended that they learn, has, in fact, been learned. The teacher has attempted to impart some content, processes, or concepts to her students. Now, by testing, she will find out how successful they have been as learners and how successful she has been as teacher. These testing instruments have generally come supplied at the end of textbook chapters or are teacher-manufactured short answer or multiple choice questions. Unfortunately, these testing media often do not do a good job accessing what a child has actually learned from a lesson.

> Most standardized tests are not representative of real reading/writing tasks. The reading tests to which students are accustomed usually contain passages about subjects for which many students do not have background knowledge. Based on the few sentences provided, the students must ascertain a single main idea, make subtle inferences on concepts which they know very little about, and choose among answers that are deliberately misleading. (Fina, Anstendig, and Lawter, 1991, p. 354)

Tests should not be written to confuse or lead a student away from the correct answers. Rather, they should be an accurate measure of what learning the student has accomplished in the various activities the lesson has presented to him. Evaluation will not be derived from

tests alone, but should come from many sources. The interdisciplinary nature of teaching thematically begs for this more holistic approach to "grading," raising a distinction between this "assessment," and the traditional evaluation.

Evaluation and assessment can not be used synonymously. "While the terms 'assessment' and 'evaluation' are often used interchangeably, they are not exactly the same" (Routman, 1991. p. 302).

Routman (1991) further explains that "[w]hile the holistic evaluation process begins with assessment and the collecting and recording of data, unless we use the data to inform and guide instruction, we are not evaluating; we are merely amassing bits and pieces of information" (p. 303). Since the whole language model of reading was chosen for this project, the data gathered through assessment about the students will directly influence classroom instruction. Routman (1988) stresses that

> [t]he use of standardized tests is acceptable as long as they are not the only means of assessment; a balance is needed. It is important to use other means of evaluation which focus on meaningful communication in the language processes—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—and the individual's day to day progress. (p. 204)

An array of tests need to be administered and kept in a file folder to show a child's strengths and weaknesses, or areas of need.

Routman (1988) defines several methods to monitor individual student's growth and needs that help to make a thematic unit not only a learning experience for the student, but a wealth of valuable testing tools for the teacher to use to evaluate each student's progress. These eight (of Routman's thirteen) are especially useful:

> [1] Running Records: Some teachers are beginning to take "running records" of students' oral reading to assess what strategies they are using. . .
>
> [2] Tape recording oral reading: Some teachers tape record students' oral reading several times during the school year to show progress. . .
>
> [3] Oral Reading: Oral reading can also be used evaluatively. Unlike the old "round robin reading" of the basal where the goal was word-perfect reading and "sounding out" without regard to meaning, process teachers use oral reading to determine the reading strategies the child is using and then guide the child towards more strategic reading. . .
>
> [4] Reading Response Logs: A look at the reading log or reading spiral demonstrates the child's written ability to synthesize and interpret information from silent reading and oral discussion, as well as give an opinion about the book. . .
>
> [5] Writing Journals: The student's unedited, daily writing about personal experiences or topics he chooses to write about. . . Journals, as well as writing folders, and occasional

dictation, can be used to demonstrate spelling as well as to show conventions of print and writing skills the child is mastering. . .

[6] Conferencing: Some teachers are beginning to use a conference approach as the main method of evaluating their students' reading and writing behaviors and progress. . .

[7] Extension Activities: . . . The way children respond to literature through art, drama, and music demonstrates their perceptions and interpretations.

[8] Self-evaluation: Self-evaluation is evaluation of the highest level. Observing the child's predicting, confirming, self-correcting strategies tells us whether or not the child is in charge of his own reading. (pp. 204-209)

Using Routman's methods to monitor student progress helps the teacher and student to know what the student is able to do and what he or she needs work on to improve. These models offer students an opportunity to improve because the student becomes an important part of the grading process. They record information about themselves, conference with the teacher, listen to their own tape-recorded reading, and take part in gathering all of the materials that will be used to decide on a grade.

Tests do not reveal whether children show confident, reader-like behavior. They don't show children's book-handling behaviors. They don't reveal whether children have experiences

> reading and writing a wide range of genres. They don't draw attention to whether children regard themselves as readers and writers, or to children's levels of independence, involvement, confidence, or enjoyment. (Calkins, 1991, p. 250)

Routman offers teachers techniques so that they may evaluate students who have a variety of learning styles. All students can succeed using his methods, because they are learning and demonstrating what they have learned by working on the various projects that thematic teaching has set them to doing; these projects become a basis for part of their assessment.

"We have also come to see more clearly that there can be no dynamic curriculum design unless it works from the insides of the students out and grows from an active process of dialogue and negotiation among teacher, student, and text" (Fina, et al., 1991, p. 358).

The teacher must be watching the students all of the time, at all different kinds of tasks. The teacher becomes an expert on each child, and knows what the child can or cannot do. "Kid-watchers know the signs of growth, of learning, of teachable moments. Teachers know how to interpret what kids do, how to see the competence and the need that underlie what they do" (Goodman, 1986, p. 75).

In the three example-units included in this paper (see Appendices, below), several of Routman's evaluative procedures have been used to monitor progress or problems during the lesson.

Starting off with my unit on frogs (Appendix A), the students are just getting their feet wet before crawling onto the land to tackle spiders and butterflies. Art, music, and drama will immerse the children in high interest activities, and most of the evaluating will be by Routman's evaluation tool #7 (above), in which most of the evaluating is done by the teacher as the students engage in their various activities.

In the spider unit, keeping a reading response log (Routman #4) gives students a place to record their feelings about *Charlotte's Web.* The logs become the basis of discussions carried on later in small groups. While a child's memory of a part of a story changes as the story progresses, writing in the log freezes his response as he reads and allows him to examine the progress of his own understanding and interpretation of the story.

Students record themselves on audio tape (Routman #2) as they read one of three spider stories. The recordings will allow the teacher to accumulate an oral reading record (Routman #3) to help in the evaluation of the students' reading strategies. The readers' theatre scripts and the "food spider" that each child will create are good extension activities (Routman #7).

Learning logs (Routman #5) and extension activities (#7) will again be used to aid the teacher evaluate the students as they study butterflies.

Self evaluation (Routman #8) will be used with all three units.

The students are encouraged to examine what they have done, what they do, and to access what they will do next in light of their evaluations. By conferencing (Routman #6) with them, the teacher gains further insight into their progress.

It becomes evident that, with all the rich and varied evaluation tools that can be added to traditional testing, a better understanding of the whole student is possible, and a better educated and happier child will result.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

FROGS

FROGS

Rationale

Despite people being minimally exposed to the slippery, slimy amphibians to varying degrees, frogs are a part of everyone's life. Frogs conjure up emotions of fear, hate, and intrigue. Creating a unit surrounding the frog presents a fascinating challenge of study. Children can learn the many facets the frog presents. Hunter, hunted, myth, and hero are a few titles frogs have held in literary works. Frogs can be found in story books, fairy tales, folklore, poems, and reference books, too. These small, misunderstood amphibians can win a place in anyone's heart through literature. Upon completion of this frog thematic unit, students will be able to discuss the varied aspects of a frog in a positive and informed manner.

Each daily lesson will consist of at least one concept about frogs, and will last one-half hour to two hours. The varying length of times per lesson allows the unit to extent to other subject areas if necessary.

Concepts

1. Frogs can be pets.
2. Frogs become human-like through authors' characterizations and dictions.
3. Frogs belong to a group of animals called amphibians.

4. Tadpoles (polliwogs) move through many stages to become frogs.
5. Frogs are often mistaken for toads because they are similar in appearance and behaviors.
6. There are more than 2,700 different varieties of frogs and each year another 100 kinds of frogs are discovered.
7. Folklore and fairy tales enhance the unique reputation of the frog.

Curricular Activities

The activities listed below lend themselves to whole group, small group, and individual working atmospheres. Some of the activities can be used for more than one area of study.

POETRY

The students will rewrite the words to the poem about the little turtle, replacing the turtle with a frog.

MUSIC

The students will learn a song sung by Raffi about five frogs.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The students will learn to play the game called Leap Frog. This game can be played in one long line or in small groups.

ART

A small group of students will create six stages of the frog cycle on large chart paper.

The students will recreate a page from a Mercer Mayer book and these pictures will be used as a bulletin board display.

The students will create all the play props for "Jump, Frog, Jump." The props include masks, nets, pond, and other characters.

Five students will create puppets for the Raffi song.

MATH

The students will review ordinal positions by learning the song by Raffi.

The students will graph their predictions as to what the classroom tadpoles will change into, frog or toad.

DRAMA

A small group of students will perform the play, "Jump, Frog, Jump."

Five students will perform the Raffi frog song.

SOCIAL STUDIES

The students will keep a diary or journal on the polliwog's physical changes.

The students will be required to research a custom of their own family for homework.

SCIENCE

The students will keep a diary or journal on the polliwog's physical changes.

The students will create the four seasons for the frog and toad to view through their house window.

LITERATURE

The students will compare and contrast two stories about a frog, a princess, and a ball.

The students will discuss a myth about Ainu women and why their tattoos are similar to that of a frog.

The students will create their own dialogue for a page of an author's wordless book.

Lesson One

Concept: Frogs can be pets.

INTO What are frogs? How have frogs become part of our present lives through personal experiences with real or book frogs?
Activity: Students need to form a circle and share their feelings orally about frogs. After some discussion, , they create a schema web using a large piece of butcher paper by brainstorming all thoughts related to a frog (color, shape, size, habits, et cetera).

THROUGH The teacher will read three Mercer Mayer wordless books:

1. A Boy, A Dog and A Frog
2. Frog Goes To Dinner
3. Frog, Where Are You?

Read the stories without interruption; stop only between stories.

After three stories have been read, discuss the frog as a character in each book. Discuss his relationship with the other characters.

Play leap frog outside on the playground about five to ten minutes before recess begins.

Lesson Two

Concept: Frogs can be pets.

BEYOND The teacher will reread the three Mercer Mayer wordless books.

The teacher will distribute multiple copies of all three books just reread. The students will individually recreate one page from one of the three books and write a dialogue about the event on the page. The teacher will move around the room and personally interact with each student. A whole class or small group sharing session ten minutes before recess will be set aside for those students wishing to share their work orally. The finished papers will be used in a bulletin board display under the book title it coincides with for viewing by peers and visitors.

Lesson Three

Concept: Frogs become human-like through author's characterizations and dictions.

INTO Remind the students of the books by Mercer Mayer and that they were wordless. Introduce the author, Arnold Lobel.

The teacher questions the students to see if they can see a difference in the two authors just from viewing the covers of the new books. Hints: Real frog versus frog and toad wearing clothes.

THROUGH The teacher reads the book, Frog and Toad Are Friends by Arnold Lobel. A brief discussion can take place between the several stories, but try keeping the students on the listening aspect of the story rather than the discussion mode.

BEYOND The teacher needs to remind the students that Mayer's frog was real. Lobel's frog and toad are people-like in behavior. Move to the final story with as few interruptions as possible. Focus on the story, "The Letter."

Discuss as a class about how letters make people feel. Decide why we receive them. Move to how Toad feels and Frog feels about letters.

Briefly discuss a basic letter format using a chart diagram.

Beginning—Dear Toad, letter body and ending—Sincerely yours.

WORK TO BE COMPLETED AT HOME The students need to write Toad a letter about something that might cheer him up (e.g.: Why do you think he looks good in his bathing suit?).

Lesson Four

Concept: Frogs become human-like through author's characterizations and dictions.

INTO Read the letters to Mr. Toad as a morning activity. Begin the daily lesson by commenting on how enjoyable it was to read the letters to Mr. Toad. Ask the students if they received one of the letters whether it would cheer them up. Allow for a brief discussion.

THROUGH The teacher reads another adventure with Frog and Toad. Read each story to the end and allow for brief discussion between the stories. Read Frog and Toad All Year by Arnold Lobel.

BEYOND Encourage the students to remember all of the stories they have heard. Ask them to focus in on the Frog and Toad stories.

Question the students about what happened in the last story of the book. What were some of the things Frog and Toad did (seasons, weather)? Remind the students about the weather unit they have already completed. Using the unit on weather and the Frog and Toad story create a moving scene for Frog and Toad to watch from their window. Use page 64 where Frog and Toad are watching the fire. Replace the fireplace with a window and using a brad attach a four sectioned moveable page to the back of the Frog and Toad scene. The

students can create a different scene in each of the four sections. Place all three Lobel books for the students to view (Frog and Toad Together, Frog and Toad All Year, Frog and Toad Are Friends).

Lesson Five

Concept: Frogs belong to a group of animals called amphibians.

INTO Discuss the frog characters found in both Mayer's and Lobel's books with the students. Question the students: What new friends (polliwogs/tadpoles) can we see in our classroom today? (Put the polliwogs in the classroom in the morning for the free exploration time before the daily lesson.)

THROUGH First the teacher reads the poem, "The Toad and the Kangaroo." This poem is fantasy and is found in Shel Silverstein's book, pages 128 and 129. Second, the teacher reads Joanne Ryder's frog and tadpole poem from "Inside turtle's shell . . .field" (page 18-21).

BEYOND Allow the students a few moments to think about the two poems. Use the terms "fantasy" and "real" when referring to these two poems. Before the students leave for recess read the story "The Caterpillar and the Polliwog," by Jack Kent.

Tell the students that polliwogs are also called amphibians. Discuss what an amphibian might be. Discuss what the new polliwogs will become when they mature.

Put several green colors of paint and paint brushes on the side

counter and allow small groups to paint polliwogs during the entire day. Cut out the polliwogs when they are dry. Display the polliwogs as a border on a bulletin board.

Lesson Six

Concept: Tadpoles (polliwogs) move through many stages to become frogs.

INTO Where do frogs live? How do polliwogs change? Do polliwog and tadpole mean the same thing? How long does it take a tadpole to become a frog? Today we will begin to answer some of these questions by reading and observing the tadpoles. (Use both "tadpole" and "polliwog" in classroom conversations with the students.)

THROUGH The teacher will read the poem about polliwogs: "The Polliwog," by Arthur Guiterman. As a class, read the big book, "Tadpole Diary." Allow students to state visual observations and personal knowledge. Go step by step through the sixteen stages of the frog. A recess break is allotted at this time.

BEYOND Piles of colored construction paper and lined writing paper would be on a table. They need to choose a colored page for their cover and several (4) lined sheets for the pages. Using these materials the students will create a diary or journal of the frogs changes. This diary or journal will be the student's responsibility. The teacher needs to allow time during the daily schedule to let the students make entries.

Lesson Seven

Concepts: Frogs are often mistaken for toads because they are similar in appearance and behaviors. There are more than 2,700 varieties of frogs and each year another 100 frogs are discovered.

INTO Today will be a unique day. The two hour lesson will include five centers. Make plans ahead of time by preparing students for each center's rules and regulations.

THROUGH Centers are to follow after a fact discovery group time, where students will construct a chart listing frog and toad facts. The teacher will act as a recorder of the information learned by the group. The books used by the students have been available since the first lesson. A basket of the books is available to the students all of the time.

BEYOND Each center will be allotted 15-20 minutes. The centers will be visited by 5-6 students who will work and move together.

CENTERS:

Center One: Using the facts chart the class created about the differences between frogs and toads, make pictures of both amphibians. A chart will be organized with headings such as the

following two: 1) Similar to Frog and Toad, and 2) Frog and Toad. Include the idea of camouflage.

Center Two: The students will create a frog or a toad using green or brown clay. The students must keep the description chart in mind.

Center Three: The students will observe the live tadpoles in the tank setting. If a frog has already developed, they may watch it jump and swim in a child's small pool. This is a good time for them to write a journal entry.

Center Four: Introduce yourself to a new book. The students will use this center to view, discuss, read, or draw information from the themes book basket. Free exploration with all of the reading materials is allowed at this center (fairy tales, folklore, story books).

Center Five: The students will sit at a listening center and hear the story, "Jump, Frog, Jump." The students will be encouraged to read along or read the story a second time in peer groups.

Upon completing all of the centers, the students will join with the teacher on the carpet. This time will be for a brief discussion on the highlights: what did students like or dislike about each center?

As the students leave for recess they will receive green finger

jello. Question the students about how this jello and a frog could possibly be similar, but keep their answers a secret until after recess. Discuss the question with peers at recess for answers.

AFTER RECESS: Have a few students share their comments about the jello and the frog being similar.

Lesson Eight

Concept: Frogs can be pets.

INTO The teacher begins the day by stating that through books the students have learned many facts about frogs. Ask the students, can frogs be pets? Are frogs like other pets?

Discuss pets and include frogs.

THROUGH The teacher reads Pet Show by Ezra Jack Keats.

BEYOND Allow the students a few moments to think about all of the pets in the story.

Discuss what kinds of pets were in the story. What would one need to do to take care of a frog? (Give the suggestions about how the students care for the classroom tadpoles.) Learn a song by Raffi called "Five Little Frogs." As a class, the students will redo the poem "I Had a Little Turtle", by using a frog to replace the turtle. A pocket-chart with sentence strips that have been cut will be used to mix and match the correct poem ending.

Lesson Nine

Concept: Folklore and fairy tales enhance the unique reputation of the frog.

INTO The stories by Zemach and Grimm are both similar and different.

THROUGH The teacher reads, "The Ball in the Pond" by Zemach and "The Frog Prince" by Grimm. Stop only between the two stories.

BEYOND Individually, the students will compare and contrast the two stories.

The students will use paint sets and a large piece of white construction paper. Fold the white paper into fourths. The top of each side of the paper is for a contrasting picture. The students need two pictures from each story. (Example: Top—Goldilocks as a little girl contrasted to a bejeweled and elegant princess.) Additional discussion can take place with the students who finish early. Discuss "The Frog Prince" and "Beauty and the Beast." How are the two stories similar and different?

Lesson Ten

Concept: Folklore and fairy tales enhance the rising reputation of the frog.

INTO We have found frogs in many different kinds of stories. A myth is a story used to explain a custom or natural phenomenon. ("If you touch a toad you get warts" and "Bad luck will come to someone when a black cat crosses his path.")

THROUGH The teacher reads "The Frog's Tattoo," by Frances Carpenter. Listen to the whole story with no discussion during the story.

BEYOND Discuss the myth as a class.

Answer these questions: Why do the Ainu women and the frog have similar tattoos? Why was the woman punished? Could she be punished in another way? Is this story the opposite of "The Frog Prince?"

WORK TO BE COMPLETED AT HOME Students will ask their parents about customs shared by their families (Christmas, La Befana, Santa Lucia). Students can share an artifact from their culture by bringing it into the classroom or drawing a picture and discussing its importance.

Culminating Activity

The students will present an assembly to the school using a few of the concepts from the whole frog unit.

One: "Jump, Frog, Jump" by Robert Kalan will be performed as a play. The students will make all of the props and create their own dialogue.

Two: "Five Little Frogs" will be sung by the whole class and five students will be responsible for making the five frog puppets. Logs, ponds, frogs, and other props will be created by the students.

Three: The students will paint the six stages of the frog cycle on butcher paper and write the dialogue to go with each stage.

Thematic Unit Evaluation Form

Student Name: _____

Unit Title: _____

Month/Year: _____

Marking scale:

Participation
1=all the time
2=most of the time
3=sometimes
4=never

_____ Student is involved in small group discussion and decision-making.
_____ Student is involved in whole class discussion.
_____ Student helps create props for projects.
_____ Student reads the literature with the whole class.
_____ Student reads the literature alone.
_____ Student works well with peers.
_____ Student maintains a personal journal or diary about the changes in the polliwog (tadpole).
_____ Student returns homework assignments.

Comments:

Reading _____

Writing _____

Listening _____

Speaking _____

_____
Teacher Signature

_____
Student Signature

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APPENDIX B

SPIDERS

SPIDERS

Rationale

Spiders have always been feared, therefore most people react by getting rid of them. Most spiders, however, are beneficial in the overall world plan. Spiders eat insects that are harmful to humans, insects that carry diseases like mosquitoes and flies, and insects that harm our plants. Unfortunately, spiders also eat insects that are not enemies to humans. Few spiders are dangerous and poisonous, the black widow and the brown recluse are two, but they usually bite in defense of their lives.

Spiders are from the group of animals called arachnids which also includes ticks, mites, and scorpions.

Spiders dwell in many places: peoples' homes, in underground burrows, in ponds and lakes, and in webs attached to garden plants. Spiders are hunters and weavers.

After completing this unit I hope helpful spiders will be spared from being stepped on and they will be able to continue doing their job keeping nature balanced despite their "forbidding" looks.

Concepts

1. Spiders can live in many places.
2. Spiders are arachnids, not insects.
3. Spiders have eight legs, and most spiders have eight eyes.
4. Two main parts make up the spider's body—joined head and chest

at the front, and the abdomen at the back.

5. Spiders spin silk from their spinnerets—tiny appendages on their posteriors.
6. Male spiders have smaller bodies than females.
7. Some spiders build webs, but the webs are not all the same.
8. Spiders hatch from eggs (egg sacs).
9. Some spiders are poisonous—black widows and brown recluse.
10. Scientists believe there are about 35,000 different kinds of spiders
11. Many folktales have depicted spiders as clever, lazy, mischievous, or full of fun.
12. Spiders can be pets.

Daily Activities:

At the end of each day a chapter from the book, Charlotte's Web by E. B. White, will be read by the teacher.

Reading Response Logs will be used by each student to write their thoughts about what was read. These Logs will be used for class, group, and buddy discussions. The logs will be kept in each student's own desk.

Curricular Activities

The activities listed below lend themselves to whole group, small group, and individual working atmospheres. Some of the activities can be used for more than one area of study.

POETRY

The students will learn a poem about spiders.

MUSIC

The students will learn four songs about spiders: "Eensy Weensy Spider," "Spider on the Floor," "I Know An Old Lady," and "Anansi."

COOKING

The students will make spiders from marshmallows, raisins, red licorice, and chocolate syrup.

ART

The students will use a potpourri of materials to create spider webs.

DRAMA

The students will read and perform two Readers' Theatre scripts: "The Spider and the Fly" and "Anansi."

SOCIAL STUDIES

The students will learn about folktales.

SCIENCE

The students will observe real webs and drawings of webs.

The students will observe live spiders.

LITERATURE

The students will record their thoughts about the story Charlotte's Web in a Reading Response Log.

The students will tape record themselves reading a book about a spider.

The students will compare and contrast two African folktales.

The students will write their own folktale.

The students will create dialogue for a character in a story.

Lesson One

Concept: Spiders can live in many places.

INTO What are spiders? Where do they live? Are all spiders the same? Does every spider build a web? Are all the webs built the same?

The students sit on the floor around the board and the teacher dictates what the students say onto large butcher paper. Two lists will be created: 1) What the students know about spiders and 2) what the students want to learn about spiders.

The students will go for a walk around the classroom and the playground to search for webs and spiders.

After returning from the walk, the students will return to their seats. The students will draw or write about new information they learned about spiders.

*A large selection of spider books will be available.

THROUGH The teacher will read the big book, I Love Spiders by John Parker.

BEYOND The teacher will remind students to think about what they saw on their walk. The students will be asked to circle one important fact that they drew or wrote, using a dark crayon.

The students will form groups according to the important fact they circled. Students will be encouraged to question friends about what they chose as the most important fact about spiders. This is how groups will be formed. The students will sit by groups on the floor. A spokesperson will be picked by the group and that person will tell the whole class what their group picked as the most important spider fact. The teacher will write on large butcher paper all the facts found by the groups.

The teacher will read a chapter from Charlotte's Web.

The students will write in their Reading Response Logs.

Lesson Two-Six

Concepts: Spiders are arachnids, not insects. Spiders have eight legs, and most spiders have eight eyes. Two main parts make up the spider's body—joined head and chest at the front, and the abdomen at the back. Spiders spin silk from their spinnerets—tiny appendages on the spider's rear ends. Male spiders have smaller bodies than females. Some spiders build webs, but the webs are not all the same. Spiders hatch from eggs (egg sacs). Some spiders are poisonous—black widows and brown recluses. Scientists believe there are about 35,000 different kinds of spiders.

INTO Today begins a five day/center rotating routine. Groups will be comparable in size, but no more than one group can be working on the same topic.

BEYOND The students will rotate through centers.

CENTERS:

CENTER ONE: **SPIDER WEBS/SILK**

The teacher will bring in several real webs that have been spray painted and mounted. Common webs: orb web, funnel web, triangle web, sheet web, and cobweb.

Display the spray painted webs and put several drawings or real photographs of the webs on the table.

Books to put on the table:

1. The Icky Bug Alphabet Book by J. Pallotta
2. Spiders & Scorpions by J. Wolf
3. Spider's web by C. Back and B. Watts
4. Amazing Spiders by A. Parsons
5. Amazing World of Spiders by J. Craig
6. Spiders by K. Petty
7. Spiders by I. Podendorf
8. Spiders by J. Dallinger
9. Extremely Weird Spiders by S. Lovett
10. Spiders by J. Dallinger
11. Spider Silk by A. Goldin
12. A First Look At Spiders by M. Selsam and H. Hunt
13. Black Widow Spiders by L. Martin
14. Fishing Spiders by L. Martin
15. Funnel Web Spiders by L. Martin
16. The Story of Spiders by D. Shuttlesworth

Place on the table: String, crayons, glue, scissors, pencils, pipe cleaners, clay, paint, (all the materials you can gather). Students will use these materials to create a web and a spider.

CENTER TWO: **SPIDERS ALIVE AND WELL**

The teacher will catch and place several spiders in magnifying containers. A black widow or a brown recluse can be included as long as the containers are taped shut to preclude any mishap. A red sticker can also be placed on the black widow or brown recluse containers.

The teacher will bring in individual bags for each student containing one large, white marshmallow, 8 raisins, and 2 long strings of red licorice. One bottle of chocolate syrup will be placed on the table and shared by all the students.

The students will make an entry in their Reading Response Logs about what they liked or disliked about the spiders and relate these spiders to Charlotte in Charlotte's Web.

The students will create a spider using food.

CENTER THREE: **SPIDER SONGS**

The teacher will tape four songs on individual tapes. The words will be copied and available to the students if they want to use them.

The songs:
1. "Eensy Weensy Spider"
2. "Spider on the Floor"
3. "I Know An Old Lady"
4. "Anansi"

The students will listen to all three songs. As a group they will vote on one song they like best and make hand motions to go with the songs' words. A brief presentation to the class will be expected.

CENTER FOUR: **READERS' THEATRE**

The teacher will provide several copies of a script that the group chooses. The students will be offered a choice between: The Spider and the Fly or Anansi the Spider. The teacher will also make a copy of the scripts being read by her so those who are having difficulty can listen to the story and then read as a group.

The students will choral read the script through the first time and choose parts to read the second time.

CENTER FIVE: **READ/LISTEN TO A STORY**

The teacher will provide the students with several copies of three books.

Each student will pick a book to read silently, If the student likes the book he will then read the book and tape record him or herself reading the book. (Running Records and Tape Recording Oral Reading—Evaluation). The books they will choose from are:

1. The Lady and the Spider by Faith McNulty
2. Eency Weency Spider by Joanne Oppenheim
3. The Very Busy Spider by Eric Carle

For practice the students can read in pairs or choral read the whole story.

Upon completing all of the centers over a period of five days, the students will join together on the carpet to discuss the highlights,

likes, and dislikes of the centers.

The teacher will read a chapter from Charlotte's Web.

The students will write in their Reading Response Logs.

ANANSI THE SPIDER

by Gerald McDermott

Readers' Theatre by Renee Semanski Goodyear

N: Narrator 1
N2: Narrator 2
A: Anansi
T: See Trouble
B: Road Builder
D: River Drinker
G: Game Skinner
S: Stone Thrower
C: Cushion

N: Anansi is a folk-hero to the Ashanti. This funny fellow is a rogue, a wise and lovable trickster.

N2: He is a shrewd and cunning figure who triumphs over larger foes. An animal with human qualities. Anansi is a mischief maker. He tumbles into many troubles. Here is one of his adventures.

N: Anansi. He is "spider" to the Ashanti people.

N2: In Ashanti land, people love this story of Kwaku Anansi.

N: Time was, Anansi had six sons . . . .

T: I am first son, See Trouble. I have the gift of seeing trouble a long way off.

B: I am second son, Road Builder.

D: I am thirsty son, River Drinker.

G: I am next son, Game Skinner.

S: I am another son, Stone Thrower.

C: I am last of sons, Cushion. I am very soft.

N2: All were good sons of Anansi.

G: One time Anansi went a long way from home.

B: Far from home.

D: He got lost.

C: He fell into trouble.

N2: Back home was son See Trouble.

T: Father is in danger!

N: He knew it quickly and he told those other sons.

B: Follow me!

N2: Off he went, making a road. They went fast, those six brothers, gone to help Anansi.

C: Where is father now?

T: Fish has swallowed him! Anansi is inside Fish.

N: River Drinker took a big drink.

D: No more river.

N2: Then Game Skinner helped father Anansi. He split open Fish.

N: More trouble came, right then.

T: It was Falcon took Anansi up in the Sky

B: Quick now Stone Thrower!

N2: The stone hit Falcon. Anansi fell through the sky.

N: Now Cushion ran to help father.

S: Very soft, Anansi came down.

N: They were very happy, that spider family.

N2: All home again that night, Kwaku Anansi found a thing in the forest.

A: What is this? A great globe of light? O mysterious and beautiful! I shall give this to my son, to the son who rescued me! But which son of six . . . Which deserves the prize? Nyame, can you help me? O Nyame!

N: For Ashanti people, Nyame is The God of All Things.

N2: Anansi asked this of Nyame.

A: Please hold the beautiful globe of light until I know which son should have it for his own.

N: And so they tried to decide which son deserved the prize. They tried, but they could not decide. They argued all night.

N2: Nyame saw this. The God of All Things, he took the beautiful white light up into the sky.

C: He keeps it there for all to see.

S: It is still there.

T: It will always be there.

ALL: It is there tonight.

The Spider and the Fly

by Mary Howitt
Adapted to Readers Theatre by Renee S. Goodyear

N: Narrator
S: Spider
F: Fly

S: Will you walk into my parlor?
N: Said the Spider to the Fly.
S: 'Tis the prettiest little parlor that ever you did spy;
S: The way into my parlor is up a winging stair,
And I have many curious things to show when you are there.
F: Oh no, no, to ask me is in vain;
For who goes up your winding stair can ne'er come down again.
S: I'm sure you must be weary, dear, with soaring up so high;
Will you rest upon my little bed?
N: Said the spider to the Fly.
S: There are pretty curtains drawn around, the sheets are fine and thin;
And if you like to rest awhile, I'll snugly tuck you in.
F: Oh no, no, for I've often heard it said

They never, never wake again, who sleep upon your bed!

N: Said the cunning Spider to the Fly.

S: Dear friend, what can I do?
To prove the warm affection I've always felt for you?
I have within my pantry a good store of all that's nice,
I'm sure you're very welcome—will you please to take a slice?

F: Oh no, no, kind sir, that cannot be, I've heard what's in your pantry, and I do not wish to see.

Lesson Seven

Concept: Many folktales have depicted spiders as clever, lazy, mischievous, and full of fun.

INTO What is a folktale? Are folktales magical? Do folktales teach children about their heritage? Where do folktales come from? Do you (the students) know any folktales? We have some American folktales: Johnny Appleseed, Paul Bunyan, John Henry, and Slewfoot Sue. Today we will focus on an African folktale. We will learn an African folktale about a spider.

THROUGH The teacher will read "How Spider Got a Thin Waist" by Joyce Cooper Arkhurst. No discussion should take place during the reading of the story.

BEYOND The students will discuss the two stories: "Anansi the Spider" and "How Spider Got a Thin Waist." Compare and contrast the two stories.

Use a Ven diagram or two columns listing the stories' similarities and differences. Appoint a student as the secretary, or the teacher can write what the students say.

The teacher will read a chapter from Charlotte's Web

The students will write in their Reading Response Logs. Students will be encouraged to share one entry with a partner.

Lesson Eight

Concept: Many folktales have depicted spiders as clever, lazy, mischievous, and full of fun.

INTO We have read two spider folktales about spiders from Africa. Both stories ended with reasons why something in today's world is like it is. ("Anansi the Spider"—The moon is in the sky because Anansi could not decide which son should get the globe of light for saving his life, and "How Spider Got a Thin Waist"—Spider has a thin waist because he was lazy and greedy.) Here is another African folktale about a spider-man. Ask students to watch for Ananse and Nyame, the Sky God.

THROUGH The teacher shows the video: A Story A Story. (Remember to display several copies of this book by Gail E. Haley.)

BEYOND The teacher will discuss briefly how Ananse and Anansi are different and alike. How is Nyame, the Sky God different and alike? (Anansi the Spider and A Story A Story) Ask the students to focus on something that they would like to explain through a folktale. (Example: Cats have long tails now because a dog many years ago grabbed a cats' short tail and pulled so hard it stayed long, instead of short like it was.)

The teacher will read a chapter from Charlotte's Web.

The students will write in their Reading Response Logs. Several students might be encouraged to read an entry to the entire class.

Lesson Nine

Concept: Many folktales have depicted spiders as clever, lazy, mischievous, and full of fun.

INTO Ask several students to briefly summarize one of the three folktales read to the class or watched on video. Ask the students to write their own folktale.

BEYOND After students finish writing their folktale, they will read it to a partner.

The teacher will read a chapter from Charlotte's Web.

The students will write in their Reading Response Logs.

Lesson Ten

Concept: Spiders can be pets.

INTO The teacher asks the students if they have ever had a spider for a pet. In the story I am going to read there is a spider that is a pet. As I read the story think about what the spider might say in each picture.

THROUGH The teacher reads the book, Just Me and My Dad by Mercer Mayer.

BEYOND The students will create dialogue for the spider from the pages of the story. This activity can be done as a whole class, small groups, or individually.

The teacher will read a chapter from Charlotte's Web.

The students will write in their Reading Response Logs.

Culminating Activity

The students will go on a field trip to a farm. They will look for and try to locate spiders. The students will compare and contrast the two barns, the one from the field trip and the barn in Charlotte's Web.

The students will make homemade bread and butter in the classroom.

The students will watch the movie Charlotte's Web.

Thematic Unit Evaluation Form

Student Name: _____

Unit Title: _____

Month/Year: _____

Marking scale:
Participation
1= all the time
2= most of the time
3= sometimes
4= never

____ Student is involved in small group discussion and decision-making.
____ Student is involved in whole class discussion.
____ Student helps create props for projects.
____ Student reads the literature with the whole class.
____ Student reads the literature alone.
____ Student works well with peers.
____ Student maintains a reading response log.
____ Student returns homework assignments.

Comments:

Reading _____

Writing _____

Listening _____

Speaking _____

_____
Teacher Signature

_____
Student Signature

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APPENDIX C
BUTTERFLIES

BUTTERFLIES

Rationale

Butterflies seem to float through the air with little effort of their colorful wings. They travel from flower to flower drinking nectar on their travels.

These tiny creatures begin life as small eggs left on the undersides of leaves, become squirming, furry caterpillars, and flying and nectar-drinking butterflies. They travel through four stages to complete the process of metamorphosis. Because of their small size, simple eating habits, and few needs, they provide children a unique classroom experience.

Butterflies are found, not only floating on puffs of air, but within the pages of many books, as well. Though often confused with moths, the many differences between the two open avenues of exploration for the avid, child scientist.

By the completion of this unit, I hope to have enlightened my student audience to the magic and mystery of metamorphosis, and further, to have given them tools and knowledge to help them discern differences between moths and butterflies.

Concepts

1. A butterfly is an insect.

2. A caterpillar becomes a butterfly through a process called metamorphosis.
3. Butterflies are often mistaken for moths, even though, more closely examined, they do not look the same or share the same habits.
4. Caterpillars and butterflies have many enemies.
5. Caterpillars and butterflies can protect themselves by using camouflage and nature's help.
6. Caterpillars, butterflies, and moths should be free to crawl or fly when they become adults.
7. Butterflies are portrayed as heroes.

Purchase for use during the lesson

Insect Lore Products sells live butterfly cultures that can be raised in the classroom in about two weeks.

Curricular Activities

The activities listed below lend themselves to whole group, small group, and individual working atmospheres. Some of the activities can be used for more than one area of study.

POETRY

The students will learn a poem about a caterpillar.

MUSIC

The students will learn a song about a fuzzy caterpillar.

COOKING

The students will make edible butterflies using Rice Krispies, black licorice, raisins, and cinnamon red hots.

ART

The students will draw and color a butterfly.

The students will make butterflies using a variety of materials.

The students will paint a butterfly.

The students will make a poster, hiding at least two insects within their artwork.

MATH

The students will use their counting skills to play the caterpillar game.

SCIENCE

The students will learn about the four stages of a caterpillar's life or metamorphosis.

The students will gather information from their family members about where butterflies come from.

The students will compare and contrast butterflies and moths.

The students will play a game and learn caterpillar and butterfly facts.

LITERATURE

The students will rewrite a story about a very hungry caterpillar.

The students will write a letter to an author.

The students will listen to the story, The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle in Spanish.

Lesson One

Concept: A butterfly is an insect. A caterpillar becomes a butterfly through a process called metamorphosis. Butterflies are often mistaken for moths, even though they do not look the same or share the same habits.

INTO What are butterflies? Where do they come from? Are butterflies always butterflies or do they change as they grow to be adults? What kinds of changes do they go through? Using these questions, have students brainstorm everything they know about butterflies. List all the ideas on the board or on a chart.

Students will be asked to draw a large picture of a butterfly.

THROUGH The teacher will read the books, Where Butterflies Grow by Joanne Ryder, and Butterfly by Michael Chinery.

BEYOND Students will help to create a new list of things learned after reading Where Butterflies Grow. The teacher and the students will compare the two lists to see what new information has been acquired.

The class will discuss what a butterfly looks like:. It has four wings, six legs, thin body, . . . After the group discussion the students will draw a large butterfly again. The students will compare the two

butterfly drawings and discuss added changes.

Sing a butterfly song: "Fuzzy Caterpillar."

Students will write in their learning logs about a new fact they have learned about butterflies (See EVALUATION, above).

Lesson Two

Concept: A caterpillar becomes a butterfly through a process called metamorphosis.

INTO Draw a large picture of the caterpillar from The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle or make an overhead transparency.

THROUGH The teacher will read the big book, The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle. The teacher will ask a bilingual teacher to read La Oruga Muy Hambrienta by Eric Carle.

BEYOND Each student will get a packet of stapled pages and a hole punch.

Each student will create a story about a caterpillar who eats and eats, then spins a chrysalis, and becomes a butterfly. The hole punch is to make the holes where the caterpillar eats through each food item.

Students will write in their learning logs.

Lesson Three

Concept: A caterpillar becomes a butterfly through a process called metamorphosis.

INTO Make a caterpillar out of yellow construction paper and black markers just like the caterpillar from A Caterpillar's Wish. The teacher will make the caterpillar in front of the students using a tear method, no scissors.

THROUGH The teacher will read A Caterpillar's Wish by First Graders of Alexander R. Shepherd School, Washington, D. C.

BEYOND Students will draw a large circle on a piece of paper and divide it into quarters.

In each section the students will draw one stage of the four stages of the caterpillar's metamorphosis (egg, caterpillar, chrysalis, butterfly) and label the stages.

Students will write in their learning logs.

Lesson Four

Concept: The caterpillar is an insect. A caterpillar becomes a butterfly through a process called metamorphosis.

INTO What is the name of the covering that caterpillars make to keep themselves safe while changing into a butterfly? Cocoon? Chrysalis?

THROUGH The teacher will read the poem, "My Opinion" by Monica Shannon. Watch the video, The Caterpillar and the Polliwog by Jack Kent. Display the book somewhere in the classroom for the students to read later.

BEYOND Discuss where the caterpillars lived while they were changing into butterflies. Use the books, The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle, A Caterpillar's Wish by First Graders of Alexander R. Shepherd School, and The Caterpillar and the Polliwog by Jack Kent.

The students will write about their favorite caterpillar story in their learning logs.

WORK TO BE COMPLETED AT HOME Ask the students to question each person at their house. The question they will ask is: "What is the name of the covering on the outside of a caterpillar before it turns into a butterfly?" Students will use a tally sheet with two headings: 1.) Cocoon and 2.) Chrysalis.

Lesson Five

Concept: A caterpillar becomes a butterfly through a process called metamorphosis.

INTO Students will combine information from homework tally sheets and write results on the board.

THROUGH The teacher will read the books, Discovering Butterflies and Moths by Keith Porter, and Butterflies and Moths by Barrie Watts. Ask the students questions about the books as the books are read.

BEYOND Make a graph of things they remembered about the butterflies and the moths.

Discuss the tally sheet results using the work that was completed at home.

Students fold a sheet of paper in half. Each student will draw a butterfly on one side and a moth on the other side.

Students will write in their learning logs.

Lesson Six

Concept: A caterpillar becomes a butterfly through a process called metamorphosis.

INTO How do you feel when the authors of these books, The Very Hungry Caterpillar, A Caterpillar's Wish, and The Caterpillar and the Polliwog indicate that butterflies hatch from cocoons rather than from chrysalises?

BEYOND In a group, discuss ways in which the authors can be alerted to the information that butterflies are hatched from a chrysalis and a moth is hatched from a cocoon.

Students will form groups and write, edit, and rewrite a letter to their favorite author they have studied. A group will consist of four to six students. Final drafts of the letters will be produced by word processing on classroom computers or neat penmanship.

Students will write in their learning logs.

Lesson Seven

Concept: A butterfly is an insect. A caterpillar becomes a butterfly through the process called metamorphosis. Butterflies are often mistaken for moths, even though they do not look the same or share the same habits. Caterpillars and butterflies have many enemies. Caterpillars, butterflies, and moths can protect themselves by using camouflage and nature's help.

INTO Today students will have a two hour lesson that will include four centers. Make plans ahead of time by preparing students for each center's rules and regulations.

THROUGH All books that have been read in this thematic unit will be available during this center experience. The books will be placed in baskets.

BEYOND Each center will be allotted 20-30 minutes. The centers will be visited by 4-6 students who will work and move on together.

Center One

A game created by Renee Semanski Goodyear using the story from the book, The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle. The students will answer questions about caterpillars and butterflies in order to

move around the game board. (Game rules and regulations can be found below).

Center Two

The students will create the four stages of a butterfly or moth's life. Students will use a large piece of plain, white paper and an odds-and-ends box filled with yarn, pipe cleaners, egg cartons, and et cetera.

Center Three

Students will read about and paint four ways caterpillars, butterflies, and moths can protect themselves. Students will use the basket of books.

Center Four

Students will listen (cassette tape) to the story, "The Butterfly that Stamped" by Rudyard Kipling reading copies of the story to follow along with the tape.

Students will write about their favorite center experience in their learning logs.

The Very Hungry Caterpillar Game

By Eric Carle

Created by Renee Semanski Goodyear

Short Summary

The Very Hungry Caterpillar is centered on the life cycle of the caterpillar. The story begins with an egg that hatches into a caterpillar and the caterpillar proceeds to eat through a variety of food items during an entire week. After eating a green leaf to cure a stomachache, the now, fat caterpillar spins a cocoon. Two weeks later the caterpillar exits the cocoon as a butterfly.

Questions

1. A caterpillar eats a leaf to cure a stomachache. What do people do for stomachaches?
2. Name another creature that makes a complete change from an egg to an adult.
3. It is your birthday. If you were a caterpillar what would you like as a present?
4. Act like a famous caterpillar. You can be rich with money, jewelry, happiness, . . .
5. Which stage of a caterpillar's life cycle is your favorite?
6.. You are a lonely caterpillar. What insect would you like as a best friend? Why would you pick that insect?
7. You are trapped inside of a house, where will you live and be safe?

8. Caterpillars are becoming an endangered species. Give a short commercial on how people can save the caterpillars.
9. As a butterfly your *top* wing has been broken. What will happen to you; can you fly? (No.)
10. You are caught in a spiders web; how would you get away?
11. You ate a poison ivy leaf. What can you do to help yourself?
12. As a butterfly your *bottom* wing has been broken. What will happen to you; can you fly?
13. Name another story that has a butterfly or a caterpillar as one of the story characters.
14. Name another creature or an object that flies like a butterfly.
15. Name one difference between a butterfly and a moth. (Ans.=body size or different antennas.)
16. Act out how butterflies hold their wings when they land.
17. You have just been told you will be a caterpillar forever. How do you feel?
18. If you were a caterpillar, what color would you be? Why?
19. You are allergic to strawberries; what happens to you?
20. How many segments (parts) does a caterpillar have? (Usually 12)
21. Act out the four stages of the caterpillar's life cycle.
    1) egg 2) caterpillar 3) chrysalis 4) butterfly
22. Sing a song about a caterpillar (or butterfly).
23. How many legs does a caterpillar have? (16 "legs")
24. Do you agree with the caterpillar eating the apple first?

25. You are allergic to plums; what happens to you?
26. It is raining. Will the water soak through your wings? Can you still fly?
27. If you were a butterfly, what color flower would you land on? Why?

Player Markers

The players in the game are caterpillars. The caterpillars consist of four green puffy pom-poms and sequins of different colors. Each caterpillar is unique.

Mover

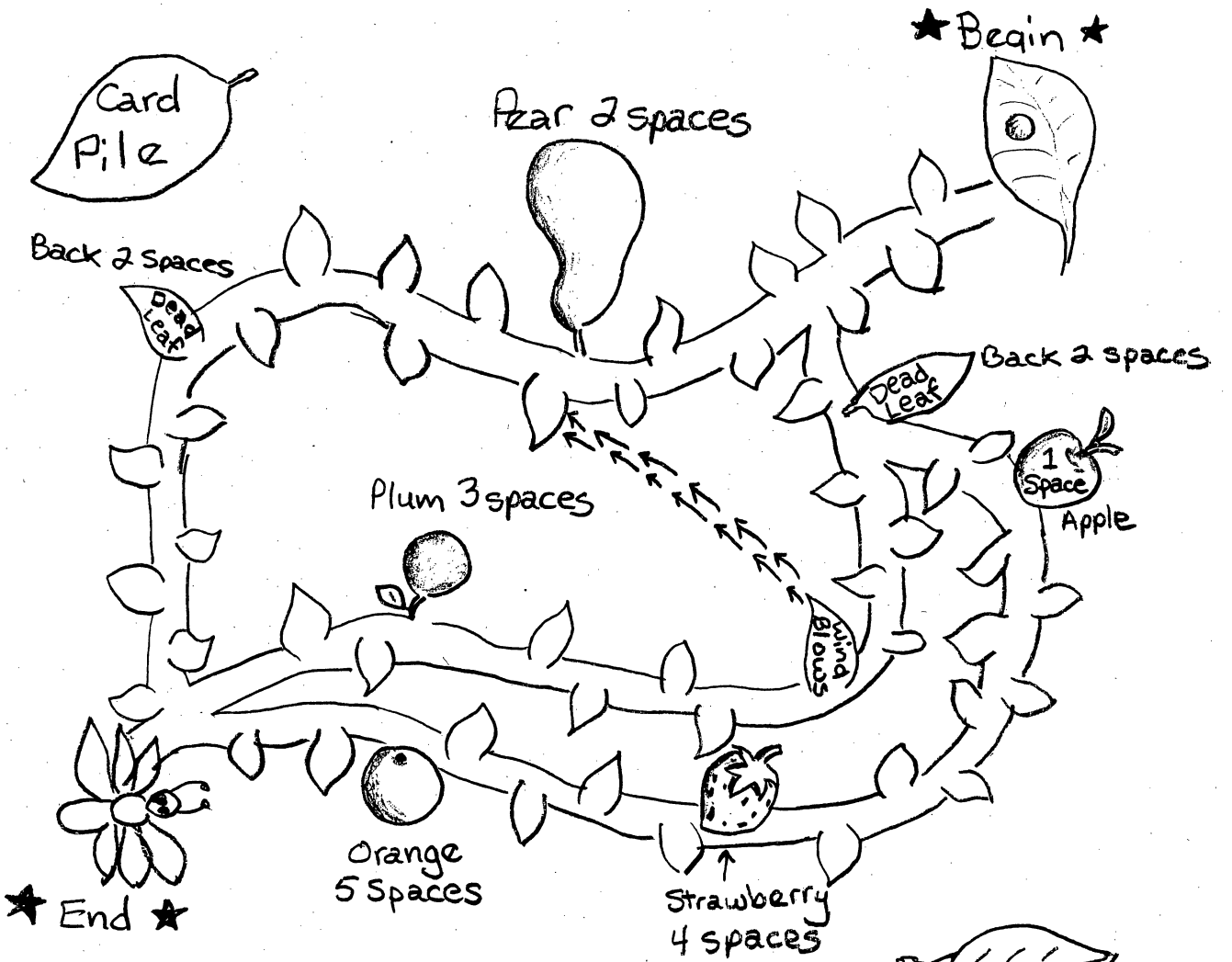
A dice (1) will be used to allow the players to move around the game board.

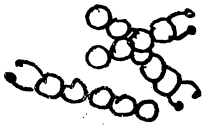
How to Play the Game

Two to four players can play this game. Prior to any individual games, the entire class will read and briefly discuss the questions to determine what the questions are asking. The game begins by having the players roll the dice to find out who begins first. The roller of the lowest number begins the game. All players begin on the leaf with the white egg and travel around the branches to read the final stage of the caterpillar cycle—the butterfly. Any of the trails can be traveled, but the players can not go backwards on the branch, unless the player

lands on a dead leaf. After the player rolls the dice, moves, then picks up the top card from the stack of leaves and responds to what the card requests. If the player does not respond to the card, he does not move and returns to the last leaf his marker was on. In order for a player to win, an exact number must be rolled, including the butterfly as one of the spaces moved. This game is for first and second grade students. If used in a first grade setting, an older student or an adult helper might be needed until the game is learned. (See following page for game board.)

The Very Hungry Caterpillar





Playing Markers

Dice

Game Cards

Lesson Eight

Concept: Caterpillars, butterflies, and moths can protect themselves by camouflage and nature's help.

INTO Ask the students to name ways that caterpillars, butterflies, and moths can hide themselves from birds, snakes, spiders, and other creatures that like to eat them. The teacher will record the answers on the chalkboard.

THROUGH The teacher will read the books, How to Hide a Butterfly & Other Insects by Ruth Heller, and If At First You Do Not See by Ruth Brown.

BEYOND The students will create a poster that displays at least two insects that are hidden in the picture. The students will display their completed poster on a wall in the classroom. When all the students have finished their posters, they will find and stand by a poster of their choice. The teacher will give each student a few minutes to view the poster and find the insect or insects hidden in the poster. When the teacher says "move," all the students move to the closest poster. Rotate until all posters are visited. Discuss the students' favorite poster and why. What made the poster unique? Was it difficult to find the insects or was it easy?

Students will write in their learning logs.

Lesson Nine

Concept: Butterflies should be free to fly when they become adults.

INTO Butterflies need freedom when they are adults. They need to find leaves to lay their eggs. Here is a young boy and let us see what he feels about trapping and keeping butterflies.

THROUGH The teacher will read The Butterfly Hunt by Yoshi. Stop several times during the story to discuss the boy's facial expressions and how students think he is feeling.

BEYOND Students will create edible butterflies using Rice Krispies treats that are cut into triangles, black licorice, raisins, and cinnamon red hots. The students will use these food items to create butterflies, then eat them.

Students will write in their learning logs.

Lesson Ten

Concept: Butterflies are portrayed as heroes.

INTO Ask the students to name some things that they are afraid of. The teacher will ask other students to raise their hands if they also have the same fears.

THROUGH. The teacher will read the book, Darkness and the Butterfly by Ann Grifalconi.

BEYOND The teacher will give the students a large piece of yellow construction paper. The students will draw a butterfly on one side and a fear that they have and would like to get rid of on the other side. The students will take their butterfly to a friend's seat and share their fear and their friend's fear.

Students will write in their learning logs.

Culminating Activity

The students will make a presentation using the book, The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle. They will make large paper reproductions of the many fruits that Carle's caterpillar eats in the course of the story. The students will make several caterpillars to show the changes that the caterpillar goes through to become an adult; they will also construct a large, beautiful butterfly. The whole class will be able to participate by: making the paper props, being one of the story characters, or by reading the story to the audience.

The students will set the live butterflies free that they had been nurturing throughout the past several weeks..

Thematic Unit Evaluation Form

Student Name: _____

Unit Title: _____

Month/Year: _____

Marking scale:
Participation 1=all the time 2=most of the time 3=sometimes 4=never

____ Student is involved in small group discussion and decision-making.
____ Student is involved in whole class discussion.
____ Student helps create props for projects.
____ Student reads the literature with the whole class.
____ Student reads the literature alone.
____ Student works well with peers.
____ Student returns homework assignments.

Comments:

Reading _____

Writing _____

Listening _____

Speaking _____

_____
Teacher Signature

_____
Student Signature

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